

CLAPTON VANQUISH GOAL-SHY WYCOMBE

By Nova

Clapton 3; Wycombe Wanderers 2

SECOND from the foot of the Isthmian League table, Clapton surprised Wycombe Wanderers with some crisp football and snap shooting at Forest Gate on Saturday and finished worthy winners.

Although the score line credits Wycombe with two goals both were actually Clapton "own goals".

Once again the Wycombe attack failed to score—for the fifth match in succession. And it was not through lack of chances. Both Ivor Ashby and Charlie Gale sprayed the forwards with passes galore.

Both Tony Horseman and George Blair seem to have lost their shooting boots. I remember only one shot from Horseman, which the Clapton goalkeeper punched over the bar, and not one real shot from Blair.

These two lie much too deep to have any chance of scoring, and this is obviously a major reason for Wycombe's lack of goals.

Len Worley and Steve Hyde were both out of the game for long stretches, although when they did get the ball they at least tried to go for goal.

Tommy Holmes, re-instated at centre-forward, had a good first half, combining sometimes brilliantly with Steve Hyde, but in the second half he was eclipsed by the quick-tackling Graham Belchamber.

PRECISION PASSING

In the opening stages of the game it seemed as if Wycombe were going to produce some of

their early season form, with the ball going from man to man with precision passes, but when they reached the penalty area they were easily bundled off the ball.

Clapton, on the other hand, kept shooting from the edge of the area and from any position where a shot was possible.

This shooting-on sight kept the Wycombe defence busy—especially a faultless Ken Brown—but Clapton's opening goal came when, for the first time, they held the ball in the Wycombe area and inside-right Ted Vibet ran on to a pass to score a good goal.

Wycombe managed an equaliser five minutes later when a harmless shot from Gale was deflected past the helpless Clapton goalkeeper by a defender.

The second half opened with a glut of goals. A Clapton free-kick inside the Wycombe penalty area was taken and apparently handled by a Wycombe player and from the penalty inside-left Norcott scored.

When, immediately afterwards, Wycombe attacked, Steve Hyde put in a weak shot from 25 yards and the Clapton right-half neatly trapped the ball, turned round, and sent a back pass to where his goalkeeper had been a few seconds before. But he had moved and the ball trickled gently into the net!

45-YARD WINNER

Clapton, however, were undeterred and fought back strongly, scoring at last with one of their much tried long shots, Vibet smashing the ball home from about 45 yards.

From then on Wycombe constantly changed positions in their forward line but the well-marshalled Clapton defence held firm until the final whistle.

John Beck again had a good game for Wycombe, while Alistair Lewis played better than he has done for many weeks.

Dave Worley, consistent as ever, played a lion-hearted game as stop-gap for John Fisher, and must surely find a regular place in the side, no matter in what position.